



2022 United Nations Ocean Conference Side Event

Small-scale fisheries' contribution to food and nutrition security and healthy oceans in West Africa

30.06.2022, 13:00 – 15:00, Hotel Eurostars Universal Lisboa

Organized by: Bread for the World (BfdW), German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Institut Mauritanien de Recherches Océanographiques et des Pêches (IMROP), Confédération Africaine des Organisations Professionnelles de la Pêche Artisanale (CAOPA), Organization of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements (CFFA), Fair-Oceans, Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC)

Background on the event (one paragraph)

The poor state of the marine environment is mainly caused by human activities in the oceans or on land (climate change, marine litter, overfishing). Measures to improve ocean health must address both ocean governance and solutions to protect the oceans as commons while enabling sustainable use. This is of particular importance for coastal residents of developing countries who live off and culturally with the sea. The side event presented scientific, policy and practical solutions from West Africa on how artisanal fisheries, important for the food security of many coastal and island communities, will continue to contribute to the livelihoods of millions in developing countries.

Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

- The importance of small pelagic fish in West Africa, particularly to supply women who make a living from fish processing. To counteract the growing shortage of raw material, women have devised various strategies, including getting better quality/less costly to produce processed products (using FTT ovens), improving the cold chain (refrigerated storage units, including solar powered), production of fish in small aquaponics units.
- The state of over-exploitation of small pelagic fish, particularly by the fishmeal & fish oil industry, aggravated by the lack of cooperation between countries of the region for sustainable exploitation of these resources. Examples were given from Mauritania,

Senegal, and The Gambia. The over exploitation is already translating by a diminution of the consumption in some countries, and a lack of raw material for women fish processors.

- The policy choice is now between using small pelagic fish for feeding the local populations or for exporting it for feeding industrially reared animals (including farmed fish) in northern countries and China.
- The challenges for young men and women from fishing communities to find a future in fisheries and avoid getting dragged into criminal activities or illegal and dangerous migration routes.

Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)

- Prioritise investments in services and in infrastructures that improve women living conditions and those of their families, such as decent housing, day care centres near processing sites, and training in the use of new technologies.
- Provide access to land and credit to support innovation in processing and marketing techniques (FTT ovens or solar fridges); support training to access new markets; and develop small-scale aquaculture to complement raw materials supply.
- Remove barriers to national and regional trade, particularly stopping the harassment of women on processing sites, markets, along trade routes and at border controls.
- Fishmeal can only be made from fish waste. Close units that use fresh fish that could be used for human consumption.
- Develop regional management of small pelagic fish, with the fixation of TACs and improved joint research. Do not allow or support any new ocean use that may negatively impact ecosystems and the communities that depend on them for their livelihoods; and make sure that free, prior, informed consent is applied.
- Support initiatives that improve the communities' resilience, particularly facing resource scarcity, helping them reduce post-harvest losses or developing supply alternatives, with the objective of offering long term decent livelihoods prospects to youth; and ensure social rights for SSF, such as access to social security, health, education, safety at sea in a way that will improve the attractiveness of the sector for youth.

Voluntary Commitments (one paragraph)

Taking into account the interests of small-scale fisheries ([SSF Call to Action](#)), OACPS is committed to implement their plan of action arising from the Ministers [declaration](#) adopted in Ghana to support the attainment of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular SDG 14 on the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development. The BMZ will continue to campaign politically for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in partner countries and for policy coherence. As a member of the Aquatic/Blue Foods Coalition, BMZ will participate in the exchange and the joint development of solutions in the coalition according to its possibilities – in West Africa and beyond. Presently, BMZ's operational engagement in fisheries and aquaculture includes the promotion of sustainable management and production methods, incl. environmentally and socially responsible processing of fish, and the support of partner countries in the fight against IUU. This commitment is to be further developed as part of the BMZ core area "Transformation of Agri-Food Systems".